

NRCS Emergency Drought Assistance Programs

The Natural Resources Conservation Service Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecast program provided the State's water users with valuable information on water availability, spring runoff and summer streamflows throughout the winter and spring of 2001. These water supply forecasts helped farmers and ranchers make difficult pre-planting decisions.

NRCS does not have any emergency programs that provide financial assistance for drought on an annual basis. But NRCS field personnel can give valuable aid to farmers and ranchers to help buffer the effects of drought through its Conservation Technical Assistance Program. Examples follow.

Irrigation water management

- Improve efficiency of existing systems
- Water storage structures
- Water measuring devices
- Crop irrigation requirements
- Sprinkler and surface irrigation systems

Soil and crop management

- Crop rotations that enhance infiltration
- Cropping systems that are less water dependent
- Conservation tillage to reduce evaporation losses from soil
- Conservation plans
- Stream buffers
- Drought-tolerant crops
- Soil type and water holding capacity of soils

Pasture and Range

- Irrigated pasture management techniques
- Grazing management
- Forage production
- Water developments
- Develop plans for emergency haying and grazing of CRP acreage

Conservation plan

- Can help reduce the severity of economic losses due to weather and its impact on crop and livestock production.
- Flexible problem solving and management process that involves soils information, plans and goals. Includes ways to overcome resource problems and how to treat each field to get desired results.

Should wild fires occur as a result of dry conditions, the NRCS **Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program** has the potential to provide technical and financial assistance for local sponsors to aid in recovery work. In addition to the EWP Program, NRCS also offers conservation information and expertise to individual homeowners or landowners seeking technical help in rehabilitation efforts.

NRCS is located in USDA Service Centers.

Online assistance

Defending Against Drought (<http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/CCS/drought.html>) presents information about drought conditions across the nation, animated maps and ideas on how to get the most use from low water supplies.

The NRCS **Snow Survey web site** provides information on reservoir storage, water supplies, precipitation reports, climate data, and more at <http://idsnow.id.nrcs.usda.gov>

NRCS is the primary federal agency that works with private landowners to help them protect their natural resources. Further information on **NRCS in Idaho** can be found at <http://id.nrcs.usda.gov>

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